

# Virgin Atlantic Airways Family Assistance Plan

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## Introduction

The Virgin Atlantic Airways Family Assistance Program has been developed to comply with U.S. Public Law 105-148 Foreign Carrier Family Support Act, December 16, 1997 and U.S. PUBLIC LAW NO. 108-176, DEC. 12, 2003, CENTURY OF AVIATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT, Section. 809, Availability of Aircraft Accident Site Information, paragraph (b) Foreign Air Transportation.

This program is part of a larger effort, which includes the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and other U.S. governmental entities, to assist survivors, survivor families and victim families in the event of an aviation disaster within the United States or US Territories.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Virgin Atlantic Airways Family Assistance Program is as follows:

- Act in the best interests of survivors, survivor families and/or victim families.
- Respond to survivors, survivor families and victim families with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Respect and be sensitive to the cultural and religious backgrounds of survivors, survivor families and victim families.
- Meet the needs of survivors, survivor families and victim families for such issues as:
  - timely information regarding the status of the passenger,
  - transportation to and from the location of the accident,
  - lodging and meals while at the accident location,
  - timely information regarding survivor progress,
  - immediate clothing and personal hygiene necessities,
  - medical needs,
  - mental health counseling,
  - assistance with transportation of remains,
  - identification and return of personal effects, and
  - pastoral support and memorial services.

Virgin Atlantic Airways will also provide similar services to immediate family members who do not travel to the accident location.

- Provide the same level of assistance listed above for crew members and their families as well as others traveling on a non-revenue basis and any victim on the ground.
- Provide training to the employees and agents of the carrier to meet the needs of survivors and family members following an accident.
- Provide mental and emotional support to Virgin Atlantic Airways employees, especially those asked to work with survivors, survivor families and victim families.

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Upon evaluation, Virgin Atlantic Airways identified limited Family Assistance personnel resources available to respond to a crisis. Therefore, Virgin Atlantic Airways has contracted with the following agencies to provide additional response staff and consultation on Family Assistance.

## **FEI Behavioral Health (“FEI”)**

FEI has been in operation since 1979 and has a customer base of over 140 companies, including Regional, Domestic and Foreign Air Carriers.

FEI will conform to the Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters as detailed by the NTSB. On behalf of Virgin Atlantic Airways FEI will:

- Provide Family Assistance Training to Virgin Atlantic employees and agents to enhance awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of survivors and family members following an accident.

In the event of an accident, FEI will:

- Provide a toll free, publicized number as soon as possible.
- Activate an inbound call center to screen initial enquiries.
- Provide a second (outbound) call center staffed by behavioral health professionals.
- The outbound call center, referred to as the Family Information Center, will respond to family members' enquiries, notify the next of kin, arrange travel and support non-travelling families.
- Provide information to families, as it becomes known.
- Offer continuous updates on notification process.
- Provide family notification before public release.
- Maintain daily contact with non-traveling families.
- Gather and compile data for the airline.
- Make travel arrangements for families, as requested by Virgin Atlantic Airways.
- Deploy a crisis management team to the on-site Family Assistance Center.
- As requested, assist in establishment of the Joint Family Support Operations Center.
- Provide on-site support and consultation to Virgin Atlantic Airways.
- Coordinate with NTSB, American Red Cross, Local Authorities, and Airline.
- Work and liaise closely with other agencies working on behalf of the airline.
- Provide escort, support, information and assistance to survivors, victims and their families on behalf of the airline.
- As requested, assist in establishing facilities and equipment as may be required to support a simultaneous electronic transmission of an NTSB Public Hearing at required locations.

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## VIRGIN ATLANTIC FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In coordination with contracted agencies, Virgin Atlantic has developed detailed policies and procedures for affected station(s) emergency operations, headquarter emergency operations, as well as accident site emergency operations. In the event of an accident, the carrier will:

*[Note: Principal responsibility is always the Carrier's. For clarification, the organization(s) responsible for carrying out or facilitating the task is indicated at the end of each section in parenthesis.]*

- (1) Notify the NTSB communications center at **(202) 314- 6290** immediately upon knowledge of a crash. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - a) Provide place of incident (or general vicinity of incident), number of passengers and crew based on preliminary departure information and number of injured and fatalities (if known). **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - b) Provide flight number, origination, connection points and final destination (if known), and whether the flight was domestic or international. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - c) Provide name and telephone number of the person who is in overall charge of the incident site. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - d) Provide name, telephone number and location of the hotel that has been designated as the JFSOC. **(Virgin Atlantic or FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - e) Provide name and telephone number of the person responsible for the passenger manifest. **(Virgin Atlantic and FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - f) Provide name and telephone number of the person responsible for family notification. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (2) Provide the public a reliable publicized toll free number with sufficient telephone capacity **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - a) When disseminating the toll-free number, Virgin Atlantic will ask the media to inform the public that only individuals who have a reason to believe a family member or friend is a passenger on the flight should use the number. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - b) The media notice will emphasize that initial calls to the airline are to provide a point of contact with the airline, provide basic flight information to the caller, and gather information so the airline may obtain points of contact for each passenger. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - c) The media will be asked to reemphasize the carrier involved, the flight number, airport of origination, connection and final destination. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - d) The "message" heard by callers on hold will urge anyone who does not have reason to believe that a family member or friend is a passenger or is unable to provide relevant

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information on the passenger to please clear the line. The "message" will also restate the carrier involved, the flight number, airport of origination, connection and final destination. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**

- (3) Provide timely notification to family members of passengers which will consist of continuous updates based upon manifest reconciliation with boarding documents (ticket lifts, ticket readers, final gate check-in name list). Virgin Atlantic will provide passenger information to family members as soon as practicable and will not wait until all names on the check-in manifest are confirmed before notifying individual family members. **Family members will be notified if passenger's name appears on a preliminary name list and informed that confirmation involves reconciling the manifest with the boarding documents collected at the gate.** Once contact is established with family members, it is maintained, regardless of whether additional information becomes available. Personnel are trained in crisis response and techniques to notify a person that a family member may have been involved in a disaster. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (4) Provide the NTSB, upon request, the most current reconciled copy of the passenger manifest. Each copy will be numbered or annotated so it can be distinguished from previous copies. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
- (5) Secure facilities at departure, arrival, and connecting airports where family members may be initially gathering. These facilities will protect them from media and solicitors, as well as provide a place to receive continuous updates on the reconciliation of the passenger manifest and other information on the crash as it becomes available. If at a secured facility, family members will be notified personally and privately by personnel trained in crisis response and death notification that their loved one is on the plane. **(STATION STAFF –and FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (6) Provide logistical support to family members requesting travel to the incident site (or to a hospital location). This includes, but is not limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, security, communications, and incidentals. Virgin Atlantic will consider the following during selection of a facility: quality of rooms, size of facilities, privacy for family members, relative location to medical examiner's office, temporary morgue, airport operations, crash site, NTSB investigation headquarters, and medical treatment facilities. **(Virgin Atlantic and FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (7) Inform family members (or family friends/clergy who are with the family) at an appropriate time, as early as possible after being notified, that it is critical they contact their family dentist to obtain dental records and dental x-rays of their loved one. Families will be asked to have the records and x-rays sent via overnight delivery to the address of the hotel where the JFSOC is located. Families will be told to send the package to the attention of the Deputy Director, FA, NTSB. Families will be advised that if they are coming to the site within the next 48 hours, they may arrange to hand carry these documents. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (8) Make provisions for a JFSOC to include space, communication and logistical support to assist local and Federal staff. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (9) Make provisions for private areas within the hotel for DMORT and medical examiner personnel to collect ante mortem information from families at the site. Virgin Atlantic will also

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- provide quiet space and communications resources for DMORT and medical examiner personnel to telephonically collect ante mortem information from families who decide to stay away from the site. Virgin Atlantic will reserve 6 to 15 rooms for crisis counseling/DMORT use. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (10) Provide necessary information on foreign passengers to DOS representatives to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign government embassies. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (11) Provide notification to family members prior to releasing passenger names to the public. Family members will be given appropriate time to notify other family members and friends prior to public release of the victim's name. While it may be necessary for some families to have more than one contact point with the airline, families will be asked to designate one primary contact point for purposes of information sharing among the family. The carrier will not release the victim's name without family consent. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (12) Inquire at the time of notification or soon after if family members desire, ARC crisis assistance or an ARC person to talk to. If family is undecided or say no, they will be asked to inform their airline representative if they reconsider. All requests for assistance will be passed to an ARC representative who will designate an ARC staff member in the family member's local area and request they contact the family. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (13) Provide the media with continuous updates on the progress of the notification process, to include: providing the number of victims' families notified as of a certain time and the number remaining to be notified. Virgin Atlantic will continue this process until all victims' families have been notified. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (14) Assist family members as they travel to and from the site by informing flight crews and airport personnel that family members are on particular flights. At departure, connecting, and arrival airports, family members will have airline personnel meet and assist them while on airport grounds. If necessary, Virgin Atlantic will seek assistance from other carriers who may have a larger presence at the airport. Virgin Atlantic will assist family members as they depart the accident site and provide a contact person who will continue to be the airline interface with the family after the family returns to their residence. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (15) Provide a contact person to meet family members as they arrive and accompany them at the incident site. A representative will be assigned responsibility for assisting the family while at the site and will continue to be the airline interface with the family until the family returns to their residence. Upon return, a single contact person for all family members may be designated. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (16) Provide a contact person from the airline to maintain daily contact with family members who do not travel to the incident site. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (17) Establish a badging system to identify family members. **(Virgin Atlantic or FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
  - (18) Establish a joint liaison with ARC at each supporting medical treatment facility to track the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**

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- (19) Develop procedures for the handling of personal effects not being held as evidence for purposes of a criminal or accident investigation. Provisions will be made for unclaimed possessions to be retained for at least 18 months from the date of the crash as required by law. **(BMS Global)**
- (20) Designate an individual who will be the airline's representative to the Deputy Director of FA. This individual will travel to various locations, such as accident site, morgue, JFSOC, and family assistance center with the Deputy Director of FA. The designated individual will have the authority or ready access to those who have sufficient authority to make decisions on behalf of the airline **(Virgin Atlantic)**
- (21) Consult with family members about any airline-sponsored monument, including any inscriptions. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (22) Provide reasonable reimbursement to the ARC for services to the family, airline, and supporting personnel. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
- (23) If the crash is declared a crime, coordinate with DOJ to arrange meetings with family members to explain their rights under the victims of crime legislation. **(FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (24) Provide the same support and treatment of families of non-revenue passengers (and any other person aboard the aircraft) as for revenue passengers. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
- (25) Participate in daily coordination meetings to review daily activities, resolve problem areas, and to synchronize future family support operations and activities. **(Virgin Atlantic and FEI on behalf of Virgin Atlantic)**
- (26) Provide training to Virgin Atlantic employees and agents to increase awareness of the needs of survivors and family members following an accident. **(Virgin Atlantic and FEI)**
- (27) When providing assistance to US Citizens within the United States with respect to an aircraft accident outside the United States involving major loss of life, Virgin Atlantic will consult with the NTSB and DOS on provision of assistance. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
- (28) **PROVIDE NOTICE CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR MANMADE STRUCTURES**
  - (a) In the case of an accident that results in significant damage to a manmade structure or other property on the ground that is not government-owned, Virgin Atlantic will promptly notify, in writing, the owner of the structure or other property about liability for any property damage and the means for obtaining compensation.
  - (b) This written notification, will include advising the property owner: (i) to contact the insurer of the property as the authoritative for information about coverage and compensation; (ii) to not rely on unofficial information offered by Virgin Atlantic's representatives about compensation by Virgin Atlantic for accident site property damage; and (iii) to obtain photographic or other detailed evidence of property damage as soon as possible after the accident, consistent with restrictions on access to the accident site. **(Virgin Atlantic)**
- (29) **PROVIDE SIMULTANEOUS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF NTSB HEARING-**

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In the case of an accident in which the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board conducts a public hearing or comparable proceeding at a location greater than 80 miles from the accident site, Virgin Atlantic will ensure that the proceeding is made available simultaneously by electronic means at a location open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the accident aircraft's flight, if that city is located in the United States. **(Virgin Atlantic and FEI)**